

To whom it may concern,

My name is Claire Newman, I live in South Windsor, Connecticut. I fully support HB 5372: An Act Concerning Dyslexia Instruction Offered in Teacher Preparation Programs. I am certified in elementary and special education, and am recognized by the International Dyslexia Association as a Certified Dyslexia Practitioner. I have a Master's in Instructional Design and Technology.

I am in my third year of teaching students with dyslexia and other reading disabilities at East Hartford Middle School. I was originally hired as a certified special-education teacher but in the first week of school, the district sent me to get certified in Orton-Gillingham, which is the original method of teaching reading to students with dyslexia. It remains the gold standard, having been created about 100 years ago by Samuel Orton, who coined the term *dyslexia*.

Despite having had intensive instruction in elementary and special education at one of the top-rated universities in New England for teacher preparation, I did *not* have adequate instruction in identifying, diagnosing, and treating dyslexia. I would say that we spent just a few short hours on it over the course of a semester. It is a travesty that in this day and age, many of my well-educated colleagues still do not understand what dyslexia is, including recognizing its signs and understanding its treatment.

Now that Connecticut has introduced dyslexia legislation regarding the IEP as of January 2015, it is imperative that all teachers who teach reading or writing in any aspect, whether in general or special education, understand, at minimum, that dyslexia is a neurologically-based disorder. They must understand that it results from a phonological-processing deficit. And they must understand that it can show itself through all other kinds of problems. In my district and in middle school, those problems are often behavioral. Had these students been taught to read when they were much younger, they would not be spending most of their energy on getting kicked out of the classroom to avoid reading and being laughed at.

Please feel free to contact me with any further questions.

Claire Newman